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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 001510

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STATE FOR EUR/NCE ERIC FICHTE, INR/I

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [EUN](#) [SNAR](#) [AF](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH ATTITUDES TOWARD AFGHAN OPIUM PRODUCTION AND  
COUNTERNARCOTIC EFFORTS (C-CN6-01612)

REF: A. STATE 192093

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 1466

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor  
Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b)&(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In response to reftel, Czech authorities said that the increased production of opium in Afghanistan will not change the character of Czech operations in Afghanistan. Ministry of Interior officials doubt that the increased production would have a negative impact on Czech society as few people use the drug despite already cheap prices. End Summary.

[1](#)2. The following paragraphs are answers keyed to questions posed in Ref A.

[1](#)A. Czech Government Reactions

[1](#)3. (C) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Department of Asia and Pacific Affairs Chief Jiri Husner and Regional Specialist Radek Rubes said that the MFA is aware of the increase in production of opium in Afghanistan and failures of the Afghan government to adequately address the issue, but these developments would not/not lead to a change in Czech support and commitment to Afghanistan (Reftel B).

[1](#)4. (C) The Czech Government (GOCR) is not providing any legal guidance or technical support to the Afghan government in developing counterdrug legislation. Husner and Rubes acknowledged the extent of the problem, and are following the issue closely.

[1](#)5. (C) MFA Afghan security policy expert Monika Studena described the MFA's attitude towards Kabul as one of frustration, but the MFA is not likely to discontinue its support of Afghanistan. MFA, which has lead on Afghan policy, believes that the counternarcotics issue is an Afghan problem that the Afghans themselves must solve. Studena underscored the fact that the international community can provide support for Afghan initiatives, and the Czechs have done so with police trainers, but cannot lead on such issues. Studena noted that Czech troops will take part in special operations in Southern Afghanistan with the British (who have lead on counter-narcotics activities), and will follow their lead in regards to the war on opium production.

[1](#)6. (C) MFA Security Policy Director Veronika Smigolova said that the failure of the Afghan government to deal with increased narcotics production would not influence the Czech government's attitude to military deployments. She said that counternarcotics operations, while a worthy goal, should not be an issue for NATO troops in the field. She said that this attitude did not stem primarily from force-protection

concerns. Rather, the success of the nation-building in Afghanistan should be NATO's primary objective, with tasks such as counternarcotics operations left to other international community actors.

¶7. (C) Husner and Rubes said that the GOCR will not increase counternarcotics efforts on its own, but will wait for U.S. lead on this issue. They also indicated that the GOCR would like to implement alternative livelihood programs, but has not done so. They said that Czech non-governmental organizations have been active and helpful in treating Afghan drug addicts.

#### ¶B. Afghanistan's Increased Opium Cultivation Impact on Europe

¶8. (C) Ministry of Interior Security Policy Department Specialist Marcel Wohlgemuth said that it is still too early for any impact on the Czech drug scene from the increased opium production in Afghanistan. However, he doubts that heroin will become an issue for the Czech Republic considering the current low rates of use despite already low prices. He explained that marijuana and ecstasy are the drugs of choice among Czechs because they are party drugs. Heroin addicts are rather anti-social, preferring to get high in small groups or by themselves. Wohlgemuth said that heroin users can get high for as little as CZK 100 (USD 4), and buy one to two grams of heroin for CZK 500 (USD 20). Heroin is currently slightly less popular than paint thinner, which can be purchased for CZK 20 (USD .90) Wohlgemuth said.

¶9. (C) Heroin purity levels and prices have remained stable for the last five years. There has been no additional social problems caused by heroin, however it is used most often by socially excluded groups, such as the Roma.

PRAGUE 00001510 002 OF 002

¶10. (C) Heroin is not a drug of top concern and is not expected to become one. National Drug Headquarters statistics show a drop in heroin seizures, from 36 kilograms in 2005 to 15 kilograms for the first 9 months of 2006. Official statistics also show that the number of heroin and opiate addicts has dropped in the last three years.  
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